

Victims of a crime and other persons directly affected by the crime may register with the **Crime Victims Services Bureau** if the person who committed the crime is sentenced to state custody.

È In return, the department provides the following information regarding adult inmates:

- , Initial location and projected release dates.
- , Furlough, release from incarceration, and sentence change due to court action.
- , Assignment to work release.
- , Upcoming hearings before the Board of Parole and Board of Pardons.
- , Escape and apprehension.

È The department does not provide notice of transfer between institutions.

The department will provide direct notice to the registered victims of a **juvenile offender in institutional custody** about the juvenile's discharge, escape, and apprehension. Notice of a juvenile's furlough and reassignment from institutional to non-secure custody can be provided only to the prosecuting district attorney.

Anyone may contact the Crime Victims Services Bureau for the following:

- , Information about the department's policies, programs, and practices.
- , Information about other agencies and organizations that assist crime victims.
- , Help in stopping unsolicited communications (by mail or telephone) from inmates sentenced to state custody.

Victim requests are confidential.

How are inmates released from prison?

Most inmates are released by **parole** or **diminution of sentence** to parole supervision.

È **Parole** is conditional release from prison by action of the Parole Board. An inmate cannot be released on parole until the board announces and holds a hearing.

- , A parole-eligible inmate does not apply for an initial parole hearing; board staff schedule it automatically. (Requests for rehearings are initiated by the inmate and may be denied by the board.)
- , A parole hearing is held about a month before an inmate's parole eligibility date (the date on which law allows release on parole).
- , Laws and policy require notice to victims and certain other persons and agencies at least 30 days before the hearing.
- , An inmate granted parole must agree to and follow a list of rules. Failure to follow the rules may result in return to prison.
- , The inmate is monitored by a parole officer until the full term date.

È **Diminution of sentence** release is conditional release from prison based on accrual of "good time" credits. This manner of release does not involve a hearing but does require supervision by a parole officer.

- , Laws passed by the legislature enable some inmates to shorten time in prison by positive actions while there. (Inmates can also lose good time credit by breaking rules or laws, thereby extending their time in prison.)
- , When an inmate's diminution of sentence date arrives, the department must release the inmate from prison to the community to be supervised "as if on parole."
- , The inmate must agree to and follow a list of rules. Failure to follow the rules may result in return to prison.
- , The inmate is monitored by a parole officer until the full term date.

È Inmates can be released in other ways—for example, by court order or at full term or on good time without supervision. Contact the Crime Victims Services Bureau for additional information about this subject.

How long must inmates serve in prison before being released on parole or diminution of sentence?

È **Inmates sentenced to a fixed number of years for a crime of violence committed on or after 1/1/97 must serve at least 85% of the time imposed before they can be released on parole or diminution of sentence.**

È **Most inmates** sentenced for crimes committed before 1/1/97 and inmates sentenced for crimes other than crimes of violence committed after that date are eligible for release as explained below.

- , A parole-eligible first offender can be released on parole after serving one-third of the sentence imposed by the court.
- , A parole-eligible second offender can be released on parole after serving one-half of the sentence imposed by the court.
- , Inmates classified as third offenders or greater are not eligible for parole.
- , An inmate who is sentenced to 30 years or more in prison, serves 20 years in actual custody, and has reached age 45 is eligible for parole consideration. (This law does not apply if the inmate is under sentence of life or death or committed a crime of violence on or after 1/1/97.)
- , If an inmate is eligible to earn good time credit toward diminution of sentence release, his earliest eligibility for release will come after he serves about ½ of the sentence.

È **Inmates** sentenced to life in prison cannot be paroled or released on diminution of sentence unless the life sentence is first commuted. (See section re. Board of Pardons.)

Victims can call the Bureau to leave a recorded message. Someone will return the call on the next regular business day.



Division of Probation and Parole

Officers in the Division's 20 district offices are responsible for the supervision of inmates released on parole and diminution of sentence and those placed on felony probation. Probation and parole officers also supervise payment of restitution, prepare reports for decision-makers (including the Courts and Parole and Pardon Boards), and inform victims about scheduled parole hearings.

~ Law identifies the following as crimes of violence:

Solicitation for murder	First degree murder
Second degree murder	Manslaughter
Aggravated battery	Second degree battery
Aggravated assault	Mingling harmful substances
Aggravated rape	Forcible rape
Simple rape	Sexual battery
Aggravated sexual battery	Oral sexual battery
Aggravated oral sexual battery	Intentional exposure to AIDS
Aggravated kidnapping	Second degree kidnapping
Simple kidnapping	Aggravated arson
Aggravated burglary	Armed robbery
First degree robbery	Simple robbery
Purse snatching	Assault by drive-by shooting
Extortion	Carjacking
Aggravated criminal damage to property	
Aggravated crime against nature	
Illegal use of weapons or dangerous instrumentalities	

The **attempt** to commit one of these crimes also is a crime of violence. Law allows a court to designate other crimes of violence.

This brochure is meant to be informational and does not include all details found in law and policy regarding the matters it explains. Additional questions are welcome.

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Can the Board of Pardons influence an inmate's release?

The Board of Pardons handles inmate requests for clemency--that is, pardon, commutation, and restoration of rights lost as the result of a criminal conviction.

È Access to a hearing before the Board of Pardons is provided by the state's constitution. **A court cannot make an inmate ineligible for consideration by the Board of Pardons.**

È **Commutation is the only non-judicial means by which a life sentence can be changed to a specified number of years, thereby creating the possibility of the inmate's eventual release from prison by virtue of parole or diminution of sentence.** Many applications to the board request commutation of sentence--that is, a lesser sentence than the one imposed by the court.

È An inmate cannot be recommended for commutation of sentence until the board announces and holds a hearing.

È Law and policy require notice to victims and other persons and agencies at least 30 days before an inmate's hearing.

È Commutation requests approved by the board are sent to the Governor, who makes the final decision to grant or deny the board's recommendation.

Questions about hearing dates and places should be directed to staff of the Parole and Pardon Boards at the numbers listed below. The Crime Victims Services Bureau does not have direct access to docket information.

- > Board of Parole (225) 342-6622
- > Board of Pardons (225) 342-5421

These numbers may be used to request a copy of the Parole Board Rules and/or a copy of the brochure "A Guide to the Louisiana Board of Pardons."

Crime Victims Services Bureau



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